

VZCZCXR06112  
PP RUEHG1 RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #1640 2951535  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 221535Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8900  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 001640

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS, AF/SE NATSIOS  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV PREL SU

SUBJECT: HUMANITARIAN AGENCY DRIVERS KILLED; AGENCIES WATCH FOR  
IMPACT ON ABILITY TO DELIVER HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

¶11. In two separate incidents, three U.N. World Food Program (WFP) contracted drivers were killed in the past week. On October 16, media reported that two drivers were killed in South Darfur while on their way back to El Obeid after delivering their food supplies. On October 12, on the road between Nyala and El-Fasher another driver was killed and 25 sacks of sorghum were taken.

¶12. Simon Crittle, WFP Communications Director, cited the lack of UN/NGO identification as a possible underlying contributing factor in the attacks. He said that the contractor trucks are usually not identified as delivering WFP food and can easily be mistaken for private trucks that haul produce and supplies. He told poloff that most WFP contractors use 15 ton trucks, a variety commonly used on the poor roads in Darfur, which are hard to distinguish from other commercial trucks carrying commercial cargo. (Comment: There is no indication these attacks were motivated by anything other than general banditry, which has been on the rise along many routes in Darfur for the past several months. End comment.)

¶13. Crittle said that WFP uses nearly 1,000 such 15 ton trucks, and have experienced a number of incidents with them. They range from simple robbery, vehicle hijackings, theft of the cargo, kidnapping and, killings. Crittle told poloff that WFP wanted to draw awareness to the deaths to underscore the insecure environment in which the humanitarian community is currently operating. He expressed hope that AMIS would be able to provide improved security, but acknowledged that they are overstretched. "The roads are full of trucks and commerce. Robberies and murder probably will continue given the large numbers of vehicles that travel."

¶14. USAID reports that at this time there has not been any discernible impact on US-funded humanitarian assistance programs. However, donors and partners are closely watching for any possible effects on their operations as a result of recent attacks. There are only a limited number of commercial trucking agencies that can handle the required humanitarian supplies. WFP, UN Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) and other aid agencies share many of the same firms. Should the truckers raise their prices or refuse to drive, particularly along selected routes, aid agencies may be constrained in delivering of humanitarian supplies in a timely manner. (Note: at this time, WFP reports that it has nearly emptied its stocks in Port Sudan, and deliveries of food aid are moving ahead as scheduled. In fact, they are looking forward to the next shipments of US-donated food supplies, which are due to arrive at the end of November. End note.)

POWERS